Community Involvement Commission

Retreat Notes

March 31, 2018

**Racial Equity**

**Trainers:** Yunuen Castorena and Tamar Zere from Race and Social Justice Initiative, Seattle Office for Civil Rights.

The City of Seattle RSJI (Race and Social justice Initiative) leads with race and follows the anti-racist principles put forth by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. They believe that it is important to work with those who are most impacted, and historically black Americans have been disproportionately impacted by racist practices and policies.

**Anti-Racist Principles** (the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond)

* Undoing racism
* Learning from history
* Sharing culture
* Developing leadership
* Maintaining Accountability
* Networking
* Analyzing power
* Gatekeeping
* Undoing Internalized racial oppression
* Internalized racial inferiority
* Internalized racial superiority
* Identifying and analyzing manifestations of racism

**Types of Racial Inequity**

* **Structural** – The interplay of policies, practices and programs of differing institutions which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions for communities of color compared to white communities that occurs within the context of racialized historical and cultural conditions.
* **Institutional** – Policies, practice, and procedures that work to the benefit of white people and the detriment of people of color, usually unintentionally or inadvertently.
* **Individual /Interpersonal** – Pre-judgment, bias, stereotypes or generalizations about an individual or group based on race. The impacts of racism on individuals – white people and people of color (internalized privilege and oppression). Individual racism can result in illegal discrimination.

**Individualism vs. Collectivism** (What will you need to give up to be a part of this collective?)

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| **Individualism**  | **Collectivism**  |
| White fragilityBeing rightPerfectionismFear of failureInsecurityIdentity/presentModel minority myth/role in anti-blacknessPositionality Hold discomfortPrivilege/ representationPersonal comfort vs. community buildingComfort/protectionismUrgency/actionNeed to leadWhite savior complexNeed to knowSafetyControl/air time | HumanityComplexity/whole personVulnerabilitySolidarityTrusting the processHistoryExperiment/ new ideasHonesty |

**Guiding questions (suggested by trainers)**

* How do we acknowledge and deepen our understanding of **Historical Structural Racism**, the role City government has played and its impact in Seattle and King County’s communities of color?
* How do we acknowledge and deepen our understanding of the **Institutional Power** the City (and Departments) hold and its historic impact on communities of color? How do we challenge ourselves and the institution to acknowledge the **power of communities** and **anti-racist organizing**? What does it look like?
* How do we acknowledge our role as gatekeepers within the City of Seattle and challenge ourselves to understand our positional power, our roles, and the information and resources we have influence and control over? How do our roles, practices, behaviors change when we do this in an anti-racist way?
* What does it look like to acknowledge, support, and re-align the city’s efforts **to community-led strategies**?
* What does it look like to be accountable to the people and communities who have been most impacted by structural racism, specifically black and native communities?
* What does it look like and what does it take to transform our departmental and city culture so that we can be in accountable relationships with communities?

**Questions raised**

* Why does the City of Seattle lead with race?
* When looking at racist systems, how do the interconnect and what is in your power as a commissioner to create change?
* Who is the target of the CIC’s efforts? Who should be the ones that the CIC is prioritizing for outreach?
* What individual traits can you give up to act as part of a collective?
* Who is your community? How are you a gatekeeper? How are you accountable?

**Next steps**

This was the start of a conversation. The trainers suggest that more training is needed for the group to be able to get on the same page.

**CIC Roles**

**Trainer:** Candace Farber, Independent Consultant

**Roles of the CIC:**

1. Provide direct feedback to the City
* Formalized? Create a mechanism?
* On what? (process vs. proposal)
* Clarify goal
1. Hold the city accountable (in terms of outreach and engagement). “Review”

**Outside of the scope of the commission:**

1. Share information with your communities
* Cautious about representation (individual vs. as a group)
* This is not something that is a role of the CIC, but individuals can choose to share if they feel so inclined
1. Host events and programs
	1. Commission can give feedback and suggestions, but it is not the CIC’s role to put on events or programs

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| **We’re here to…** | **Not to…** |
| * Review how city engages (policy around outreach, allocation of resources- grants)
* Make recommendations for doing better (= more equitable)
* Hold the city accountable for race and social justice
* Directly advocate/voice beyond engagement
* Chosen as experts on equity /champions
* Get actionable results
* Provide feedback /influence what engagement looks like
* Advise the city on equitable practices/policies
* Process
* Make suggestions to DON
* Be heard by DON on policy – formally
* Point out the gaps
* Ask questions
* Bring a lens/perspective but not “speaking” for
 | * Do outreach
* Provide political cover
* Review or propose activities
* Speak on behalf of communities
* Represent particular groups
* Do city’s job/play role that could be budgeted
* Be a focus group
* Direct outreach
* “Shadow city council”
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**Workgroups**

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| **Work Group Name** | **Members** | **Statement of Purpose** |
| Commission Charter work group | Sonj, Julie | Establishing our charter, scope of work, workable norms, and relationship to other (relevant) organizations |
| Resources Committee | Ben, Natalie, Alex  | Equitable distribute city resources so that communities are able to achieve self-determined goals |
| Relationship to City/ Feedback | Emily, Sally, Bereket | Develop best practices on how departments ask for feedback and how the CIC gives feedback |
| Community Involvement Principles and Best Practices | Alison, Carol, Patricia, Felix\* \*to confirm on his return | To advise the City on community engagement/outreach practices to achieve equitable involvement of historically underserved populations |